
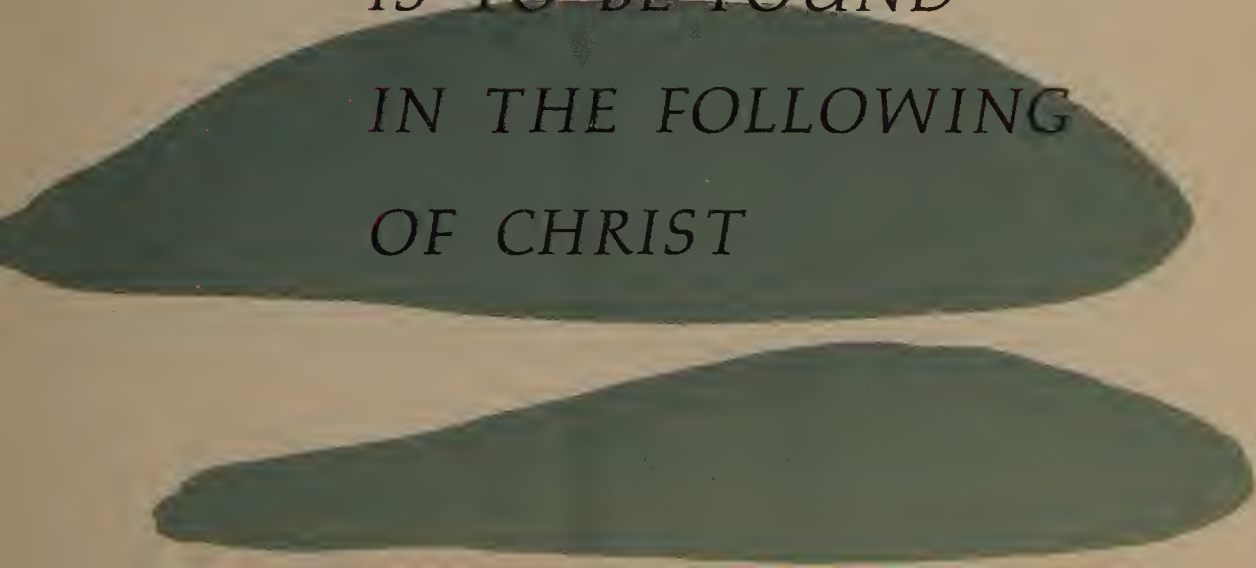


# SPONSA REGIS

APRIL, 1965



TO HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING IS  
NO MONOPOLY OF CHRISTIANS



THE ORIGINALITY  
IS TO BE FOUND  
IN THE FOLLOWING  
OF CHRIST



# SPONSA REGIS

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*Religious and the Constitution De Ecclesia* 227  
RICHARD A. HILL, S.J.

*Oneness in Worship* 234  
SISTER MARIE THEODORINE, C.S.J.

*The Temporal Commitment of the Religious* 237  
JORDAN BISHOP, O.P.

*Poem* 245  
GERALD F. KEOHEN

*The Virgin: Sign of the Divine Indwelling* 246  
THOMAS DUBAY, S.M.

*Bulletin Board* 251

*Book Reviews* 254

NIHIL OBSTAT: Reinold Theisen, O.S.B., *Censor deput.* IMPRIMATUR:  
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# Religious and the Constitution De Ecclesia

RICHARD A. HILL, S.J.

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*), promulgated by Pope Paul VI in the name of the Ecumenical Council on November 21, 1964, will certainly be the object of profound study by theologians for many years to come. Its full import will become clear only after prolonged reflection and discussion within the Catholic Church itself and between Catholics and the theologians of other Churches. It is a document whose importance can hardly be exaggerated at this hour of history, and this is true for religious and all who follow the counsels in canonical states of perfection. To make some contribution to the dialogue which will center around this Constitution, I would like to make some preliminary observations on certain themes in this document which particularly concern the states of perfection.

The first observation must be the notable absence of the very expression just used, the "states of perfection." Since the famous Apostolic Constitution, *Provida Mater Ecclesia*, of 1947, in which Pope Pius XII recognized the Secular Institutes as juridical states in the Church, the expression, "states of perfection," became normal in ecclesiastical documents to designate in a generic manner Religious Institutes, Societies without Public Vows, and Secular Institutes. And in the preparatory documents of the Second Vatican Council this title was used as an accepted expression which designated these three states. However, at the insistence of the Conciliar Fathers it has disappeared, and we may presume that it will not normally be used in the future.

It is not difficult to understand why this expression has been allowed to fall into desuetude by this Constitution. Perhaps the most important doctrinal advance made in it is the clarification of the relationship between the religious life and the vocation of all men to perfection, to which the baptized are already committed by their regeneration by water and the Holy Spirit. The Christian vocation itself is the state of perfection, and there can be only



one kind of perfection in the present dispensation of grace, the perfection of charity.

With this in mind we must ponder the following statements of the Council, giving particular attention to the context in which they appear.

For this reason [because Christ has united himself to his Church and has sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in it], all men within the Church are called to holiness, whether they belong to the Hierarchy or are themselves cared for by the Hierarchy. This is the import of that statement of the Apostle, "This is God's Will, your sanctification" (39).

In the same paragraph the Council says, "It is therefore clear to all, that all Christ's faithful are called to the fullest share of Christian life and to the perfection of charity, whatever their state or condition of life." And towards the end of this chapter on "The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church," the Constitution expresses the mind of the Fathers in these words:

In the different states of life and in the various offices in the Church, only one holiness is cultivated by all men, who are moved by the activity of the Holy Spirit, who are obedient to the voice of the Father and who adore God the Father in spirit and in truth. These persons follow Christ who is poor, humble and carrying his cross. They do this in order to be worthy of sharing his glory (41).

Earlier in the document, in the chapter entitled, "The Laity," we read that there is a common dignity of all the members of the People of God and that this common dignity is rooted in their common rebirth in Christ. There is one common grace for all and one common call to perfection (32). The same paragraph continues, "Even if not all follow the same path within the Church, nevertheless all are called to holiness and share a common faith in the justice of God" (32). In fact, the laity, because they are baptized, are not only called to be themselves holy, but they are called to the apostolate of increasing the holiness of the Church by bringing about its increase in others (33).

These few citations will point up the context in which the sixth chapter, "Religious," is to be considered. The religious state (and, with the Constitution, we understand this to include Societies



without Vows and Secular Institutes) is not characterized precisely by a call to the perfection of charity. The religious state does not, in fact, differ in kind from the vocation of Baptism itself. How then does this vocation, so highly praised and defended by the Ecumenical Council, differ from the vocation of all Christians?

In the final analysis it seems that we must say that the religious vocation differs from the vocation of Baptism in degree and manner; it is the connatural outgrowth of that vocation. The first hint of this distinction appears in the chapter on the laity, where the Constitution says: "Religious, by reason of their state of life, offer a very clear and obvious witness (*testimonium*) to the fact that the world cannot be transfigured, that it cannot be offered to God, unless the spirit of the beatitudes is observed" (31). This, I believe, sets the theme for the chapter on religious, a theme which is first developed somewhat in Chapter V, "The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church." The religious state is a state of *public witness* to the perfection of charity which Christ brings about in his Church.

We read in Chapter V:

However, this holiness of the Church is made known, and it must be continually made known, by the fruits of grace which the Holy Spirit brings forth in the faithful. It finds many different kinds of expression in individuals, who tend toward the perfection of charity in their states of life and in this way encourage others. In a certain proper way (*proprio quodam modo*), this holiness is made manifest in the practice of the counsels, which are customarily called evangelical. This practice of the counsels, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is taken up by many Christians, either privately or in a condition or state of life approved by the Church. It offers to the world, and must offer to the world, a clear witness and example (*praeclarum testimonium et exemplum*) of this same holiness (39).

This echoes the thought first expressed much earlier in the Constitution, in the second chapter, "The People of God," where the Council speaks of diversity in the unity of the faithful. Turning briefly to religious it says: "Many others, who live in the religious state, follow a narrower path to holiness and thus inspire their brethren by their example" (13).

No one will fail to notice the thematic repetition of the expressions, "witness to the world," "example to the brethren," "en-



couragement to others." This is the vocation peculiar to religious, to bear witness. But to whom do we bear witness, and, more importantly, to what?

The religious, precisely as such, bears witness to the world; he is an example for the world. And by the world is understood all men, believers and unbelievers. "Religious should be careful to keep it before their minds that it is through them that the Church continually and effectively makes Christ known to believers and to unbelievers" (46).

But to what is the religious life a witness, an example? In brief, the vocation to the profession of the counsels is to be a witness to the Heavenly Jerusalem, that lasting city which we await in the Second Coming of the Lord (cf. 44). In fact, that Kingdom yet to come has already come into existence, and this is the burden of the seventh chapter of the Constitution on the Church. By his whole way of life and by all he does, the religious witnesses to the new life which Christ has won for us by his death and exaltation, and to the final resurrection. The whole point of the Gospels is that Jesus already lived the life of the world to come during his own mortal life, to the extent that this was possible in a mortal nature. And this way of living he offered to his disciples themselves. "The religious state closely imitates the life of Christ and perpetually re-presents it in the Church" (44). "In a singularly clear way the religious state makes known how far above earthly things is the Kingdom of God and what its demands are. . . . The religious life witnesses to the surpassing virtue of Christ, who now reigns, and to the infinite power of the Holy Spirit" (*ibid.*).

Certainly this desire to live the life of the "last days," inasmuch as this is possible in this world, is a dynamic intrinsic to the Christian vocation. At all times in the history of the Church some Christians have committed themselves to a life which has attempted to approach the condition of the *parousia*, to prefigure the life which is yet to appear in its fulness. These Christians use material things as if not using them; they make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom; they are promptly responsive to the will of the Father, which is their bread, in every detail of their lives, as that holy will is made known to them through the hierarchical Church.



This is evidently the mind of the Council when it says that the religious life, through the profession of the evangelical counsels, is the effort of men to bring forth a continually more abundant harvest from their baptismal grace (cf. 44). And it is noteworthy that the Council does not hesitate to affirm that it finds the profession of the counsels called evangelical in the life and teaching of Christ, in the doctrine of the Apostles, the Fathers, the Doctors, theologians, and pastors of souls in the Church (43).

It finds the characteristic of the religious life not only in its principal quality of public witness, but also in its *stability*, the permanence of its commitment to the perfection of charity. This does not mean, of course, that those who are baptized (and thus equally committed to the perfection of charity) do not or cannot persevere in that vocation. This would be manifest absurdity, not to say heresy, and would directly contradict what the Council itself teaches in the chapters on the laity and on the universal call to holiness in the Church. But the Council does teach that there is a special stability, a peculiar firmness, imparted to any commitment confirmed by vows made to God. It is the public profession of the vows which establishes a man or woman in the "state" of the counsels. And it is not only the vows themselves which make this way of life stable and firm. The very fact of community guarantees the perseverance of the religious in his vocation.

In the opening paragraph of the chapter on religious, we read that the Church moulds the religious life out of (*inde*) the practice of the counsels, giving this practice stable expression through the approval of religious institutes (43). In this context the marriage-image, so characteristic of the mystical writers, appears, but in a somewhat untraditional expression. Christ is presented as wedded to his Church, and the bond between them is firm and indissoluble. The religious weds himself to his consecration to the life of the counsels. The model of this bond is the bond between Christ and his Church. No one can overlook here the allusion to Ephesians 5:21-32, the famous marriage text. Here is the way the Council expresses this:

So much the more perfect will this [religious] consecration be, the more perfectly Christ joined with his Spouse, the Church,



by indissoluble bonds is represented by the more stable bonds [of the vows] (44).

This is faulty English, but it attempts to reproduce the Latin text exactly, precisely because the thought is so complicated. That this way of life also draws a special stability from the fact that it is pursued in community, is beautifully expressed by the Fathers of the Council in these words:

These religious families offer their members support by making their way of life more stable and by providing them security in teaching about the pursuit of perfection, because their doctrine has been tested and proved. They provide their members the stability of fraternal communion in the militia of Christ and freedom strengthened by obedience. In this way the religious are able to carry out their commitment with security and to guard their profession faithfully. In this way they make progress in joy along the path of charity (43).

The whole context of the Constitution on the Church seems to lend support to the understanding of the religious life as a state of life immediately and directly structured by charity. In its origin and in its day-to-day unfolding, each religious institute embodies that expression of the love of God and of the neighbor which was the vision of the Founder and the first members. This is not, in fact, precisely true of any other state of life in the Church. Certainly the priesthood and marriage, as well as unconsecrated celibacy, should be entered upon and continually informed by the foremost of the virtues. But these states of life cannot be said to be themselves, in their very constitution, the expression of charity itself. This, I believe, is the real import of that statement of the Council already cited, that the religious life is moulded out of the actual practice of the evangelical counsels by individuals. For no one could undertake to live these counsels, themselves the ultimate expression of the spirit of the beatitudes (cf. 31), except for the love of God and the more loving service of the brethren.

For the moment let this serve as a contribution to the dialogue among religious about the importance of the Constitution on the Church for them. It provides us with a solid theological ground for the commitment which this life implies. There are many problems facing the contemporary religious community, some of which become more acute with the passing of time. Consider, for example,



the matter of religious obedience, which exercises so many today. And many of these problems present themselves from outside the religious families.

It is a matter of the utmost urgency that religious come to a clear understanding of their vocation as something truly unique in the Church; that the theologians among them, especially, elaborate a sound theology of religious vocation. The code of canon law and the too-often hyperbolic writings of pious men neither suffice nor are they to be placed in the order of first principles in this matter. A vocation grounded in anything less than an authentically Christian theology is neither secure nor fulfilling. Once elaborated, this theology of religious vocation must be presented clearly and effectively to the whole Christian community.

This Conciliar Constitution points the way. It provides secure confirmation for the best of contemporary thought about the evangelical counsels. The theology which it embodies is not only sound, but very attractive. As religious we are grateful to the Council Fathers for the place which they have judged necessary for the profession of the counsels of perfection in the Church.

I do not wish to leave this subject without calling attention to two other paragraphs in the chapter on religious. These deserve fuller consideration. The first of these is found at the end of #45. There the Council calls attention to the liturgical context of the religious profession itself. This, of course, echoes the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (80), in which the Council calls for a special rite of religious profession and states that this profession should be made within the Mass itself. This had been initiated in the new code of rubrics published in 1960 (370, c).

The second paragraph to which I would like to direct attention briefly is in #46 in the chapter on religious. Here, in what appears to be one of the very few polemical statements of this Council, the Fathers warn against an error which seems to be gaining some respectability among Catholics today. This opinion holds that the vows of religion, especially the profession of perfect chastity, impede the full and normal development of the human personality. That this opinion is truly contemporary can be understood by anyone who reads, even casually, many current publications. There can hardly be any doubt that the counsels of poverty,



chastity, and obedience, when they are not correctly understood or when they are practiced by men or women of unstable or damaged personality, can be the occasion of excesses and can become the occasion of deterioration of true charity. But, that these counsels necessarily or even commonly have such an outcome, is the consequence of poor observation and of even poorer theology. Even the Catholic press sometimes presents absurd statements which pretend to be scholarly declarations. Obviously, in each person this matter of the counsels is an existential problem. The neat distinctions of the Schoolmen admittedly solve little outside the order of logic. Nevertheless, conscientious, informed and literate Catholics are questioning values which religious have until now accepted without question. The questioning is heard within the cloister too. In the Constitution on the Church we have a solid theological basis from which to work toward a solution of these difficulties.

## *Oneness in Worship*

SISTER MARIE THEODORINE, C.S.J.

How often since *Mediator Dei* first appeared has the idea of the communal, public nature of the Church's liturgy been presented with ever growing insistence and conviction! Through reading one can become persuaded of its truth, but unfortunately one can still feel and still be just another individual, a God-and-me closed circuit among as many other such closed circuits as there are members of the Congregation. The *experience* of community at worship, of oneness with the risen Lord in worshipping the Father—is this an existential possibility?

Our community—a group of thirty-five teaching Sisters of Saint Joseph—has gradually been initiated into such an experience



since our retreat last June. The Eucharist with its varied ways of participation, its homily, and its meaningful celebration was indeed the high point of each retreat day and a high tide of *felt* oneness in community, in love, in worship. After retreat, the return to the usual Mass was, to say the least, a letdown. Gradually, although we "answered" the Mass and occasionally sang appropriate Mass hymns, we were, for the most part, back in the closed-circuit routine, wishfully looking back to the Celebrations of retreat time.

With the appointment of a new chaplain, himself imbued with a humble and sincere enthusiasm for liturgical reform, we were enabled once again to emerge from our individualistic attendance at Mass to communal worship. How? Tangible changes from the old way include a table altar with the priest facing the congregation; a daily homily (short but packed); singing several times a week; prayers of the faithful expressing important community and individual petitions; offertory processions daily; entrance processions and recessions to mark special feasts. In the pre-English days, one of the community read the epistle and Gospel; now a Sister recites the introit, gradual, offertory, and communion verses—those parts which, according to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, belong to the people.

Oneness in love and worship was further emphasized by the giving of the Kiss of Peace at our Midnight Mass on Christmas. The ceremony was simple but meaningful. Singing the *Agnus Dei* (in English), we left our pews to form a semicircle around the altar. Placing his hands over the folded hands of the server, the priest said, "May the peace of Christ, the Prince of Peace, be with you." The server repeated the words and gesture to the first Sister on either side of the semicircle, who in turn passed the Kiss of Peace to the one next to her until all had received and given this symbol of Christ's own love and peace. Immediately after this ceremony was completed, still in our semi-circle, we received Holy Communion.

Each of these activities contributes to the total effect, but it would be oversimplification to the point of falsehood to imply that these activities alone effect a transformation. Contributing in a less positive way is the absolute absence of pressure—those *who want to*, take part in processions, read, sing. (Significant here is the sudden scarcity of hymnbooks—the choir now numbers thirty-five!) Our superior herself is open to the changes, cooperates



actively with the chaplain, but never exerts any pressure on individual members of the community.

Changes less tangible and much harder to describe are those which are taking place within the thirty-five individuals—changes which snap the closed circuits and weld us into a worshipping *community*. Most important here is the sense of “corporateness” that has gradually pervaded not only our worship but our entire living, manifesting itself, for instance, in the simplicity and openness with which we can exchange our views and spiritual insights without embarrassment or pietistic patter.

Supporting our liturgical renewal and supported by it are the activities geared to community *aggiornamento* promoted by our Congregation: monthly discussion groups, monthly practices, and conferences from superiors, treat of aspects of religious life in the light of suggestions from the Council and call for a rethinking of her vocation on the part of each Sister.

From our Eucharistic Celebrations has stemmed a palpable growth in community love—not a deliberate striving to “practice charity” nor any extra effort to do so, but simply a warmer acceptance of one another as persons, a realization of what Christ meant when he said, “A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: that as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

The experience of community at worship, of oneness with the risen Lord in worshipping the Father, is becoming a reality in our convent.



# *The Temporal Commitment of the Religious*

JORDAN BISHOP, O.P.

Much has been written in recent years about the temporal commitment of the layman in the Church, and we may accept as a constant in the history of the Church the fact of the involvement of the layman in the history of human society. At the same time, there is a new awareness of the responsibility of the layman in the work of proclaiming the Christian message in the world. Sooner or later the question was bound to be asked, and is being asked: What about the apostolic vocation of the religious? Should she not give more time to the proclamation of the Gospel and perhaps less time to arithmetic and geography, nursing or social work? All these things can be done by lay people, and are in fact being done by them. In the highly socialized structures of contemporary society, the need for Catholic schools and hospitals is not the same as it was a century ago, if we except some mission areas where society is simply incapable of meeting these needs. Are our schools and hospitals anachronistic?

These questions can and should be asked on the occasion of new foundations, and for long term planning, but any realistic approach to the question must take present commitments into account. A mass suppression of Christian institutions, in themselves temporal, could only result in chaos, so that a real loyalty to our society excludes immediate suppression of these institutions. What is more immediately important, on an institutional level, is a redefining of the function of such institutions in our society, and, on a personal level, the vocation of religious engaged in temporal things, whether in Catholic institutions or in other circumstances.

At first glance, this may appear to be a justification of the *status quo*. A theology conscious of the historical dimension cannot ignore the concrete situation of perhaps a majority of the religious in the Church today. The involvement of a large number of religious in the temporal order has been a factor in the life of the Church for some time, and in one way or another is apt to



remain so. The question must be asked: How can this be justified in terms of the Gospel? We may take it as given that the total commitment of the religious is to the Gospel, and it is precisely here that the temporal commitment of religious is beginning to be questioned. Should these men and women, who have made public profession of a special commitment to the Kingdom of God, dedicate themselves to things which are of this world? Should they not rather engage themselves in a more evangelical ministry?

#### THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

The religious community—any religious community—must be considered first an *ecclesial* community, a group of men or women gathered together in Christ's name (cf. Mt. 18:20), realised in a special way in the liturgical celebration, united in their common sharing in the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the eucharist. This should not, of course, isolate them, but rather deepen the bond of communion with the whole Church—a "community spirit" that *divides* is not Christian. In this it might be said that there is no great difference between the religious community and the parish community; neither can be said to be a *Church* in the sense that a diocese is. Yet it cannot be denied that the commitment to the Christian life in a religious community is lived with a special intensity; these men and women have given themselves to the service of the Gospel and to the following of Christ in a very special way. In a sense their vocation is that of all the baptised, united in Christ, in a common response to his Word, in a common re-living of the Christ-event in the liturgy, in a common expectation of the fulfillment of his kingdom among men. It might be presumptuous to say that God's kingdom is present here with more intensity or perfection than in other Christian communities—of these things we cannot judge—yet the deliberate acceptance of a life given wholly to the service of the Gospel implies a special vocation in the Church, and the history of the Church shows that it has always been accepted as such.

#### THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DIMENSION

We live in eternity, since the kingdom is already established among us. However weakly, however often we forget it, the supreme event in history—the presence of God among us in Jesus



Christ—has changed our destiny. In him we share in a new life, the life of children of God, the life of faith. And while we cannot say that any lack of faith is implied in choosing to remain "in the world," the embracing of the religious life constitutes in itself a special witness of faith, a special witness to the newness of life wrought by Christ. All are called to follow Christ, all are called to Christian perfection; yet the religious by his profession, by the terrifying literalness of his response, accepts the challenge to follow Christ in a special way. Faith is something more than a condition of life in Christ; it has become the condition of one's whole existence, the dominant factor in one's whole life. Without it, the life of a religious has no meaning, no sense. There is no escape. And it is perhaps here, in this complete and open espousal of the eschatological dimension of the Christian life, that we can find a constant in the situation of the religious. "Separation from the world" can be, after all, a negative thing, sought for a variety of motives. To have left everything, as Saint Jerome says in the familiar breviary homily, is no monopoly of Christians; the philosopher Crates and many others have done this. The originality is to be found in the following of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

#### RELIGIOUS ALIENATION

To be a religious, to accept the challenge of faith in complete simplicity, in no way implies a renunciation of being human. The Marxist critique of the religious commitment, in focusing our attention on real dangers in it, has done Christians a service. Living in eternity, giving a special witness to the eschatological dimension of the Christian commitment, can give rise to a real alienation, a retreat from reality not unlike that criticised by the Marxian tradition, in short, a subtle form of "pie in the sky" religion. Paradoxical as it may sound, this danger can be even more real for the religious in the active life than for the contemplative, since the human density of the contemplative situation forces a hard, realistic acceptance of the human condition, and less possibility of evasion.

The dangers of alienation, of becoming less human, can be seen precisely in the areas in which the religious commitment is concretised: the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The

<sup>1</sup> Lib. 3 in Matth, c. 19. Homily for the feast of an Abbot.



first danger is that these may be conceived in an excessively individualistic and juridical manner. Unreserved acceptance of the Gospel cedes to a search for security. The community dimension is forgotten in an individualistic preoccupation with rights and duties, carefully defined and limited, and the whole religious life is seen as a question of "my salvation" rather than as the living of an ecclesial reality, the flowering of the baptismal vocation.<sup>2</sup>

In particular, the vows of religion can provide an occasion for an escape from being human. Obedience, especially if the analogy with obedience as a natural virtue is pressed too hard, can involve an abdication of basic human responsibility, a running away from life under cover of religious discipline. The fact that a person has renounced his or her own will by taking a vow of obedience hardly means that he or she is exempted from all initiative, from all thought. Yet it can easily happen that a religious renounces not only his or her own will, but all responsibility for the work of the community, assuming an attitude that in practice involves "doing what one is told, no more, no less," never contributing an idea to the community or to the superior, and acting in general as if the superior had some magic omniscience which enabled him or her to foresee all contingencies without the help of the members of the community. This can at times be traced to a mystique of authority which has plagued the Church in modern times,<sup>3</sup> and which can take the form of attributing magical powers either to the person of the superior or to rule-keeping within the framework of the religious institution. It can also, on the individual level, involve a fear of responsibility, or the lack of humility neces-

<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that a certain juridical ordering of the structures of the religious community is not necessary. But to define the situation of the religious life in juridical terms involves a serious risk, more particularly in a culture dominated by individualism, such as that from which we are now emerging in the Western Church. A defining of the religious life in terms of the minimistic strictures of the canonists can be as dangerous as the fanaticism which casts off all juridical structures as opposed to the "Gospel" (i.e., the gospel of the fanatic involved).

<sup>3</sup> "This 'mystique' may be characterised as the notion of a complete identification of God's will with the institutional form of authority. In the latter, it is God himself whose voice we hear and heed. The fairly wide margin which the Middle Ages still left for the subordinate's appraisal is, for all practical purposes, reduced almost to nothing" (Yves Congar, "The historical development of authority" in *Problems of Authority* (Baltimore, 1962) page 145).



sary to submit one's initiatives and ideas to the criticism of the superior and of the community. In any event, the vow becomes a pretext for a real alienation, the negation of a dimension of the human personality. It is quite true that this can happen in any human group; one often sees it in a particularly explicit form in military organizations.

This spirit can manifest itself in a multitude of things. In a teaching community, one can refuse all responsibility for the textbooks used, for extra-curricular activities, class schedules, or any of the multitude of little things which make up the daily life of the community. This spirit can seriously limit the witness of religious in society at large. For example, it is doubtful that a superior could prudently send a subject to join the N.A.A.C.P.; if such a witness is to be real, the initiative must almost necessarily come from the subject.

Of course, it should be obvious that the role of the superior and of the community as a whole are important if individuals are to accept their responsibility. A suggestion can be made which the superior knows from experience to be utterly impractical, but if it is rejected with impatience or held up to ridicule, it is quite possible that the first idea proposed by the subject will be the last. And there are probably as many ways of communicating displeasure at the "impertinence" of a new or inexperienced subject as there are ways of thanking a subject for his or her interest in the welfare of the community. The fact that a subject has the courage and humility to submit ideas to the judgment of the community and the superior should in itself be reason for gratitude.

All this, of course, presupposes that charity is a living reality in the religious community, and this brings us back to our first consideration. The religious community is above all an ecclesial community, a community whose religious commitment is by definition at the level of a eucharistic community. The classical theology of the Eucharist is much involved in the concept of such a community, since it is through the Eucharist that we experience the reality of the Body of Christ, the Church. A living charity is both a condition and a fruit of our new existence in Christ. The charity of Christ is basic to the bond of unity celebrated in the



Eucharist, as a sacrifice of a particular eucharistic community but involving the whole Church, the whole Christ.<sup>4</sup>

This is not to imply that obedience, as it is lived in our communities, is in fact a cause of alienation. Indeed, we must assume that the charity which is a condition of survival for an ecclesial community is in fact present, and that religious obedience, on the whole, does constitute a real witness to the submission of the community to Christ, a living sacrifice which finds its culmination in the common participation in the Eucharist. At the same time, it would be naïve to suppose that this commitment is always lived to the full, or that the alienation of which we speak is entirely absent from our communities; ours is a time of pilgrimage, the time of the Church, and sin and weakness, as well as grace, form part of our life.

Chastity, as lived in our religious communities, has always constituted an extraordinary witness to the power of the Gospel among men. Yet even here, and without speaking of the profound alienation involved in sins of the flesh, the witness of chastity can be deformed by attitudes that make this commitment a dehumanizing factor. A fear of sex, a denial of the obvious fact that we are men and women and not angels, can deprive us and the apostolate of much of the value of the witness of chastity. We should not see this vow in terms of running away from ourselves, to consecrate to the service of God and men a sexless caricature of what we should be. A witness which deforms our personality is hardly convincing; one might wonder if anything worthwhile has been sacrificed. This is not to say that it is easier to live our vows as real men and women, although the lack of realism involved in a merely negative view of celibate chastity can have tragic consequences.

A similar fear of our human condition can detract from the efficacy of the witness of apostolic poverty. We do not make a vow of poverty merely to avoid the responsibility of involving ourselves with material things, or from fear of being unable to face the hard facts of life in a material world. Criticisms of the regime of poverty as it is lived in our communities do indeed insinuate that we can accommodate ourselves too well with the mammon of

<sup>4</sup> Cf. K. Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (Quaestiones Disputatae, n. 9) New York, 1963, pp. 82-87.



iniquity; but the problem of equilibrium in this matter can be solved neither through a morbid fear of money nor through a reducing of "poverty" to petty-bourgeois economies. We must learn to use material goods as though they did not matter, yet accept the obvious fact that they do matter, that these things are necessary for human existence. Perhaps the greatest danger here, in our time, is the failure to extend the personal commitment to a community level. The individual commitment is real and it is lived, and yet we are still open to the temptation to enhance the prestige of the Church, of our institutions, by impressive buildings, by mass identification with the middle class. We forget the spectacle of a Saint Albert the Great exposing himself to ridicule when, as a bishop, he continued to wear the crude shoes of a friar, not because he was eccentric, but because he was a friar. The great shock of the mendicants was not that they renounced material goods, but rather that they dared to identify themselves with the proletariat of the time. It may well be argued that this particular witness to poverty has less meaning in a society of abundance; yet one may also ask if the standard must be set, for religious, by the style of life of the upper middle class. Our witness is primarily an eschatological one—we are not of this world. But we are in it, and while the form our poverty takes may not be the same in every community, and will vary from place to place, it must be real, and it must involve a real solidarity with the poor of this world who, we must not forget, are still with us. Our witness is not one of worldly prestige, but of the cross.

#### A TEMPORAL COMMITMENT

We are in the world, and no religious of active life can be thought to be exempt from a real commitment in the task of constructing a better world. While we have seen in our time a laudable preoccupation with the missionary needs of the Church, with the primacy of the task of evangelism, it hardly seems that a religious should feel frustrated if he or she be completely engaged in the teaching of geography, mathematics, or philosophy. To be fully human is a condition of the efficacy of the witness of the religious to the kingdom, the only real answer to the accusation that our religion is a "pie in the sky" affair, and this implies that the temporal commitment of the religious be *real*, that his or her



service to the community respond to a real need, that the human values involved in the teaching of geography or philosophy be respected. Saint Paul, it is true, warned Timothy against entangling himself in worldly affairs (II Tim. 2, 4). Yet the history of the Church has honored those who dedicate themselves to the service of others, whether as geography teachers or as priest-workers, while insisting with Saint Thomas that this must be motivated by charity rather than by a desire for riches or honor or worldly delights.<sup>5</sup>

It should hardly be necessary to add that this service does not find its justification in a subordination of geography or philosophy to a work of proselytism, or to the creation of a Christian ghetto in competition with secular institutions. A *service* that is seen as necessary, in a spirit of charity, is quite enough, if the need be real. Often enough, a religious can give himself to such service with an intensity that is difficult for a layman whose involvement in the world is more complete. We must avoid the oversimplification of schemata which divide the spiritual and temporal tasks neatly between religious and priests on the one hand and laymen on the other—schemata which incidentally risk excluding the layman from the tasks of evangelism or reducing him to a merely instrumental role in the apostolate. Rather, it is the whole Church which must be present in the world, to preach and to serve. The witness of a religious in the concrete must be determined by his or her gifts and the needs of the community, and if this involves a temporal commitment the witness is no less real. Karl Rahner has written that "...the Church's power of fulfilling, in her lay Christians, the worldly task of transforming the world can only be maintained if these laymen are truly seeking God above and beyond everything in the world and through and beyond

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 2-2, 187, 2. The precise question asked is "Can a religious be involved in *worldly affairs*?" and their worldiness is accepted without hedging. In our opinion, geography and philosophy would fall into this category as much as running a drill press in a factory, and would not be changed by the fact that they are taught in a Catholic institution instead of in a public school. The question must, of course, be seen in the light of the medieval situation, but from the context and the tenor of the reply to the first article of this question (on "teaching and preaching") the teaching of "profane" subjects would appear to fall under "worldly" affairs. "Teaching and preaching" in the sense of q. 187, a. 1, require powers given only to clerics, at least in the middle ages.



all its failures. It is only when a Christian with the status of the counsels is aware of the commandment to love his neighbor, and through that of his responsibility for the world, so that he takes his place in the whole mission of the Church to intensify the unity of the two orders, that he is really a Christian."<sup>6</sup> It is precisely in the fact of exercising a real and efficacious temporal (or worldly) commitment that the religious can show the basic compatibility of such a commitment with a total commitment to the Gospel, that his eschatological witness becomes all the more real in virtue of a real service in charity. It should hardly be necessary to add that those religious who are involved in the direct apostolate must also present themselves to the world as real human beings. It is here that the power of the Gospel must be made manifest.

<sup>6</sup> *Mission and Grace*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1963, vol. I, p. 97-98.

## EASTER: ORIENT

Dead of night lighted  
in song of break-dawn, heard thru  
eyes slanted by sleep.

GERALD F. KEOHEN



# The Virgin: Sign of the Divine Indwelling

THOMAS DUBAY, S.M.

With a typical patristic combination of simplicity, charm and depth, Saint Ambrose proclaimed sixteen centuries ago: "*Ubi cumque virgo Dei est, templum Dei est*: wherever a virgin of God is, there is a temple of God."<sup>1</sup> By a short and logical further step we can add to this dictum another conclusion: wherever a virgin of God is, there is a living sign of the divine presence. The virgin is a sacrament of the sacred inhabitation of the Trinity because by her consecrated integrity her whole being is reserved for all that the indwelling mystery implies.

## INDWELLING IMPLICATIONS

To appreciate this last remark we must first delve to some small extent into the doctrinal riches found in the scriptural account of this mystery. We can perhaps best uncover some of these riches by beginning with a problem: How can Father and Son come and the Holy Spirit be sent to a place where they already are? Sound philosophy makes plain the fact that God is everywhere by knowledge, essence, and power. He is necessarily in the least swirling electron and in the most mighty of the whirling galaxies constantly pouring out their whole beings. Otherwise, they could not exist for a fraction of a second. God must likewise be in the sinner at every moment or the sinner would immediately vanish from the universe. How then can this God speak of coming to certain men who fulfill certain conditions? He is already in them, making them to be even before they fulfill the conditions. Yet somehow he resides anew. This he says: "If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you shall know him, because he will dwell with you, and be in you. . . . If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come

<sup>1</sup> *De virginibus*, Bk. 2, c. 4; P.L. 16:214.



to him and make our *abode with him*" (John 14:15-17, 23). How can this be?

A careful scrutiny of the words Jesus uses in revealing this mystery offers several clues (the words we have italicized) as to how this can be. But before we follow up the clues we must notice the vast differences found to exist between what we may call the mere material or local presence of persons to each other and their interpersonal, "familiarity" presence.

A material or local or spatial presence of persons is proper to them *as bodies*, not as intellectual, loving, enjoying beings. Two bricks can be as close materially as Jill and Joan. All four are material bodies. But Jill and Joan can be close on the far loftier level of interpersonal, intellectual knowledge, love, and enjoyment utterly impossible to the bricks. In this superior sense Jill in Tokyo and Joan in Paris are far nearer to each other than the two bricks in one wall.

For persons, spatial proximity is less important than affective proximity. Donald would rather have Donna in the next county loving him intensely than hating him in the same room. For persons, therefore, mutual love adds a closeness and presence far transcending their physical closeness. It is a nearness of interpersonal intimacy.

Now it seems obvious to us that this is exactly what Jesus is saying in his disclosure of the divine inhabitation. He makes clear that the matter is a question of a mutual-love closeness based on knowledge and consummated in delight. Here are his words together with a brief commentary: "If you love me (the condition is an affective, interpersonal one), keep my commandments (the proof of love). And I will ask the Father and he will give you (hence, you will possess the Gift) another Advocate to dwell (a personal-love way of being in a place: He *is* in a sinner, but he does not dwell) with you forever (this interpersonal intimacy is meant to be eternal), the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him (that is, it lacks the basic interpersonal condition of a knowing faith). But you shall know him, because he will dwell with you, and be in you (hence, the divine inhabitation causes some kind of special, intimate understanding of the Spirit). . . . He who loves me will



be loved by my Father (the love relationship is mutual), and I will love him (the Son acts also, for the Trinity's outer operations are common to the three persons) and manifest myself to him (another proof of interpersonal familiarity). . . . If anyone love me (that same love condition again), he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him (all three persons are now accounted for as indwelling) and make our abode with him (like dwelling, abode is a familiar, loving way of being in a place—God does not abide or dwell in a stone, though he is in it). . . . Abide in me, and I in you (the indwelling is actually an *interindwelling*). . . . These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you (this is the normal consequence of a knowing, loving union), and that your joy may be full (this is the supreme joy of joys)" (John 14:15-17, 21, 23; 15:4, 11).

This same insistence on linking the indwelling presence with an inter-personal knowing-loving-delighting is apparent in many other New Testament formulations of our mystery.<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt, then, that whatever else the indwelling mystery means, it certainly includes the revelation of a remarkable set of interpersonal relations with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, relations of a new mutual knowing, loving, delighting, possessing.

#### VIRGIN-SIGN OF INDWELLING

Why may the consecrated virgin be called in her very person a sacrament of the divine inhabitation? Why may Saint Ambrose so charmingly say that "wherever a virgin of God is, there is a temple of God?"

Our first answer to this question centers on the interpersonal aspect of the indwelling mystery. If a new knowing, loving, enjoying are elements in the divine indwelling, and if we can say that the virgin is a virgin for the sake of a more intimate and intense knowing, loving, and enjoying of the Trinity, we must conclude that virginity must be aimed at the indwelling mystery. The basis for our first condition we have already traced out. The basis for the second is plain in Sacred Scripture. When Saint Paul explains the finality of a dedicated virginity, the three purposes he indicates are (1) a freedom to please God more perfectly; (2) a

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 5:5; 8:9, 16-17, 26; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 1 Jn. 4:12-13, 16.



heart that is undivided in its love for the Lord; and (3) the opportunity to contemplate him and his mysteries.

I would have you *free from care*. He who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how *he may please God*. Whereas he who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and *he is divided*. And the unmarried woman, and *the virgin, thinks about the things of the Lord*, that she may be holy in body and in spirit. Whereas she who is married thinks about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. Now this I say for your benefit, not to hold you in check, but to promote what is proper, and *to make it possible for you to pray to the Lord without distraction* (I Cor. 7:32-35).

The virgin, then, is a virgin that she may give herself wholly to what is essentially implied in the indwelling mystery: an intimate contemplating, loving, and pleasing of the Trinity.

Our second answer bears on the scriptural connection between the purity of the human temple and the Lord God abiding within it. When Saint Paul addresses himself to the task of giving reasons why the Corinthians should be pure, it is significant that he completes his list with an appeal to the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in their bodies as in a temple. "The immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought at a great price. Glorify God and bear him in your body" (I Cor. 6:18-20).

Furthermore, the presence of this sacred Fire within renders the human person so holy that God himself will avenge an attack upon it. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, him will God destroy; for holy is the temple of God, and this temple you are" (I Cor. 3:16-17). And in some mysterious way the Spirit abiding within spiritualizes the flesh of the human temple. "They who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh, but they who are according to the spirit mind the things of the spirit. For the inclination of the flesh is death, but the inclination of the spirit, life and peace. . . . You, however, are not carnal but spiritual, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells



in you" (Rom. 8:5-6, 9). To a sanctified man, therefore, we can especially apply the praise God lavishes on his chosen ones: "You were renowned among the nations for your beauty, perfect as it was, because of my splendor which I had bestowed on you, says the Lord God" (Ezech. 16:14).

If, then, revelation speaks of a close connection between chastity and indwelling, we must draw the inference that virginity is precious for the indwelling. "Never," wrote Saint Jerome to the virgin Eustochium, "has a golden or silver vessel been so dear to God as is the temple of a virginal body."<sup>3</sup>

The virgin stands before the world as a witness to the astounding truth that Father, Son and Holy Spirit have chosen to abide in the persons of the pure. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). She stands as a sign that the Trinity wants to be close to men in a mutual knowing-loving-enjoying familiarity. Even if she were never to enter a classroom or walk down a hospital corridor, she in her very consecrated person asks the world, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

#### POSITIVE LIVING OF VIRGINITY

It becomes clear upon consideration of our two mysteries that virginity possesses an eminently positive orientation. Like any choice, it implies the negation of all other possibilities incompatible with it,<sup>4</sup> but it is by no means a sterile negation, an empty, joyless deprivation. A virgin is a virgin in order to love and delight in the most romantic manner open to her. She who has left all things to possess all things actually attains a hundredfold even in this life. "Everyone who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt. 19:29). Nothing could be more positive than this.

The whole purpose of virginity is to be preoccupied with the indwelling Trinity: being "concerned about the things of the Lord," pleasing him, thinking "about the things of the Lord," praying "to the Lord without distraction." To her especially must we say,

<sup>3</sup> Letter 22 to Eustochium, #23; P.L. 22:409.

<sup>4</sup> In the same manner, when a man chooses to be a lawyer, he declines medicine and a hundred other professions, or when he chooses to marry Sue, he leaves aside millions of other girls.



"Look to him that you may be radiant with joy. . . . Taste and see how good the Lord is."

Virginity, then, is a sacred mystery that can be understood only in the context of the Christian revelation. Nothing else makes it intelligible. Yet once its relation to the Christ-mysteries are grasped, it becomes luminous and serves as a light on a mountain. It is a sign of the Fire within.

"Wherever a virgin of God is, there is a temple of God."

## *Bulletin Board*

The *Saint Louis Review* recently carried a news story about the "Sisters' Sharing Group" which has gone into operation in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis. With the objective of exploring and implementing the Constitutions on the Liturgy and on the Church, representatives of fourteen religious communities in the Archdiocese have been exchanging ideas and, as one put it, picking one another's brains. During February and March they sponsored an eight-week basic orientation course in the liturgy for Sisters, taught on successive Saturdays by Sisters who are experts in their respective fields.

Since organizers of the group wanted to have the permission of major superiors of each community, only those communities whose provincials or generals are stationed in the Archdiocese are currently represented. These include the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet, Sisters of Mercy, Ursuline Nuns, Religious of the Sacred Heart, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, Sisters of Saint Mary, Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood of Ruma, Maryknoll Sisters, Good Shepherd Sisters, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Oblate Sisters of Providence, Sisters of Divine Providence, and Daughters of the Cross.



However, any Sister in the Saint Louis area was free to attend the liturgy workshop, and 246 took advantage of the opportunity.

The Sisters' Sharing Group promises to be very fruitful, and it may be hoped that their example will be followed in other parts of the country. The problems and potentialities of all religious communities are very much the same. By pooling their resources, a group of communities can acquire the expert advice that one community alone might be unable to provide, and just the exchange of ideas can go far to simplify a problem or make a new step less difficult. The initiative of a group also inspires the separate communities to individual action, and the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood are currently responding to the original impetus by conducting another weekly workshop on "The New Testament World" which is open to any Sister who wants more background in the New Testament. Thus common action produces all sorts of results, and we hope that this kind of program will find many imitators.

In our own efforts to spread discussion of the Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, we present two articles that are directly related to the Constitutions. *Father Richard A. Hill, S.J.*, professor of canon law in Alma College, Los Gatos, California, discusses some of the broad implications of the Constitution on the Church; *Sister Marie Theodrine, C.S.J.*, describes the liturgical renewal that is taking place in her community at Saint Teresa's Academy in Kansas City, Missouri, where she teaches English. Two other articles refer to important aspects of contemporary religious life. From his post as teacher and missionary in La Paz, Bolivia, *Father Jordan Bishop, O.P.*, considers the question of apostolic commitment and concludes that the Church is in need of many kinds of apostles, not only those who comment on First Corinthians but those also who teach mathematics. (Sheed and Ward of London are publishing his book, *Latin America and the Winds of Change*, this spring.) Finally, *Father Thomas Dubay, S.M.*, of New Orleans, continues his discussion of virginity, educing further illustrations of his thesis, that the dedicated virgin is a truly sacramental sign in the Church when she fully lives out the implications of what she is. Our poet this month is *Gerald F. Keohen, M.D.*, who, be-



sides the practice of his profession, paints, collects religious stamps, cultivates roses, and writes poetry. He lives in Dubuque, Iowa.

The Fifteenth Annual Institute on Religious and Sacerdotal Vocations will be held on the campus of Fordham University on Wednesday, July 7, and Thursday, July 8, 1965.

The Vocation Institute will again sponsor two workshops during the following two weeks:

- 1) *Workshop for Mistresses of Novices, Postulants, and Junior Professed* will be held from Monday, July 12 until Friday, July 16 inclusive.

The speakers and their topics are:

- a. Rev. Matthew J. O'Connell, S.J. - *Liturgy and Sacramental Experience As a School of Religious Life.*
- b. Rev. Joseph G. Keegan, S.J. - *Personality Development in the Religious Life.*
- c. Rev. Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J. - *New Horizons in Biblical Studies.*

- 2) *Workshop for Local Superiors* will be held from Monday, July 19 until Friday, July 23 inclusive.

The speakers and their topics are:

- a. Rev. Matthew J. O'Connell, S.J. - *The Place of Liturgy and Sacraments in Religious Life.*
- b. Rev. Joseph G. Keegan, S.J. - *Psychological Growth in the Religious Life.*
- c. Rev. Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J. - *Salvation History and the Educational Apostolate.*



## Book Reviews

*THE MYSTICISM OF OBEDIENCE.*  
By Rev. Bernard Leeming, S.J. St.  
Paul Editions, Boston, 1964. Pp. 71.  
Cloth, \$3.00.

Religious obedience, among other subjects pertinent to religious life, has been restudied and reinterpreted, and it has not refused to yield new depths of meaning. Father Leeming, in another treatise of the subject, amalgamates new concepts and old, brushing off irrelevant and mistaken notions. He renews the old and deepens them by telling us, in language we cannot fail to grasp, of the mysticism of obedience upon which the new interpretation must be founded.

The short but satisfying treatment is divided into four parts after an introduction in which the author reasserts the simplicity inherent in true greatness and questions the "simplicity" of some nuns commended for their obedience by Saint Teresa of Avila. He then proceeds to develop the four considerations about obedience "which show that there is a great mystery in it, and a great reality of union with God."

In the first consideration, "Christ's Obedience and the Blessed Trinity," we are predisposed to the notion of mysticism in obedience by recalling the simplicity of God, his oneness with the Son whose very mission was fulfilled by obedience to the Father.

In the second part, "Our Obedience and Our Share in the Life of

God," we are shown how we become sharers in God's nature by using the 'gift' of obedience. Hence it is that obedience is one of the greatest gifts of God in our vocation and merits our growing understanding of it in our daily lives. Reverting to the practical, Father Leeming compares obedience to faith if, for instance, a superior governs badly. "I am doing *His* will, and not the ignorant, stupid, or prejudiced will of any creature."

The third consideration, "Christ's Obedience and the Redemption of Mankind," reemphasizes the active role of obedience in our lives as opposed to its passive existence. Our redemption was not accomplished by merely passive submission, but because Christ's sacrifice "was an expression of the most absolute submission of the will of the Incarnate Son of God to the will of God."

The fourth and last discussion, "Our Obedience and Our Union with Christ Our Savior," weds the notions of "blind obedience" and intelligent obedience, and how this must necessarily lead to the union we seek. The yoke of obedience, though naturally burdensome and repugnant, unites us to Christ more than anything else, for he too suffered and overcame the effects of human repugnances.

In this little work, generously salted with Scriptural quotations, the author has reached both depth



and breadth in simple, straightforward language. Father did not forget that even in striving for the mystical, there are practical problems to be faced, and he cites what is necessary to ease our minds into the ultimate aspect.

If there are those who feared the turn of events in the new trends of thought on obedience, Father Leeming has collected these and placed them in their proper setting, and reinstated the fact that to obey intelligently must lead to union with Christ.

Sister Mary George, O.P.  
Saint Anthony Convent  
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

*A MARRIAGE MANUAL FOR CATHOLICS.* By Dr. William A. Lynch. Forward by Richard Cardinal Cushing. Trident Press, New York, 1964. Pp. xx, 359. Cloth, \$4.95.

This book is meant to be a complete, practical guide to a happy and successful marriage, in thirteen chapters, followed by an epilogue of typical questions and answers concerning topics most often asked about at pre-Cana Conferences. Following this epilogue is a section of family prayers and readings from the Bible, mostly from the Old Testament; a betrothal rite; the marriage services and Mass for the bridegroom and bride (the old one), a bibliography, and an index. The book jacket lists the author as a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology, a member of the faculty of the Boston College School of Nursing, and a frequent lecturer at pre-marital conferences.

Perhaps one can forgive a doctor for somewhat overemphasizing the physical and medical aspects of marriage. Undoubtedly the author writes from his personal experience. But that experience is in no way tempered and enriched by the experience and studies of others, as the completely inadequate, in no way up-to-date, bibliography proves. There is much too little on the social and cultural impact on Christian married living today. The author does not adequately present the latest on the medical functioning of the pill nor the best and latest on breast feeding and the detection of ovulation. The engaged couple could work through this book with some profit, but there is little to recommend it to the reading of Sisters.

However, given our changing world and the multiple problems associated with family life today, one is tempted to say that every Sister should read a good book on marriage and the family occasionally. In the pages of *Sponsa Regis* for January, 1959, the Reverend John L. Thomas, S.J., had valuable things to say concerning "Training in Marriage and the Family for Sisters." (One Catholic graduate school has already introduced a course in marriage for nuns.) One might immediately suggest Thomas', *The American Catholic Family*. Sisters would also read with great profit Professor A. H. Clemens' *Christian Design for Marriage*. The reading of these and similar books giving a broad treatment of marriage and family life today would help the teaching Sister to implant in her students positive and healthy ideas



on love, sex, chastity, and marriage. Such books, furthermore, would also help the Sisters in counseling the young into the holy vocation of marriage to say nothing of helping them understand better every child, always the product of a particular family, which, in turn, is much influenced by the prevailing culture. The latter the Sisters should understand.

Paul Marx, O.S.B.  
St. John's University  
Collegeville, Minnesota

*THE PROPHETS AND THE WORD OF GOD.* By Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P. Fides Publishers, Inc., Notre Dame, Indiana, 1964. Pp. 324. Cloth, \$4.95.

Father Stuhlmueller has been an active and influential leader in the biblical movement. This book is a collection of eleven essays, all but one previously published in various periodicals: two are from the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, the others from more popular publications. The fact that they were originally addressed to audiences of different levels unavoidably entails a certain unevenness, even though the more technical articles have been stripped of their scholarly apparatus. However, these disparate pieces have for the most part been welded into an impressive unity, covering most of the prophetic literature. One chapter is introductory, six treat of individual prophets, the other four of prophetic themes or other related questions. Anyone who wants to understand the prophets will be grateful that these excellent essays

have been collected together in handy form. Father Stuhlmueller's scholarship is sure, though lightly worn, and always inspires confidence. Furthermore, he has an attractive style and a happy faculty for conveying profound truths in a simple but meaningful way. The value of his work, as Bernard Cooke points out in the Foreword, is that it makes the prophetic message live for men of today: an excellent example of skillful popularization backed up by sound scholarship. Unfortunately the proof reading was careless and the book is marred by many typographical errors: the reviewer counted about seventy. An index of biblical references would have added to the book's usefulness.

Claude Peifer, O.S.B.  
St. Bede Abbey  
Peru, Illinois

*LETTERS TO NANCY.* By Father Andrew Greeley. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1964. Pp. 182. Cloth, \$3.95.

In the preface of *Letters to Nancy*, Father Greeley tells the reader that his book is not a systematic treatise on the spiritual life. And the reader finds that it is not. The nineteen chapters (letters) are more like an expanded commentary on various points of discussion brought up in informal talks with serious-minded young people.

The subjects touched on — marriage, sex, home or career, personality and freedom, faith in a modern world — are dynamic enough. But to this reviewer the early pages of the book are so slow-moving that she



began to suspect that Father Greeley, fascinating speaker and eminently successful worker with youth that he is, had better stay away from publishing his letters to young women. For the book, heavy with quotations, which the author himself deprecates (but continues to use!), at first seems only partly successful in putting into permanent form what is best caught (and taught) in the spontaneity of enlivened discussion.

But by the third chapter ("The Lived No") we discover what we felt was true all along: Father Greeley has much to say. Whether he is discussing college or marriage mania, the Peace Corps or the liturgy, he brings his rich experience in sociology and his penetrating insight into adolescent (and older) human nature to bear on the subject. The result, *Letters to Nancy*, is rewarding.

Adults who must guide youth will find the book helpful in analyzing problems of modern living which their young people face, as well as in proposing guide lines to help solve those problems.

But the book will be most useful to the "Nancys" for whom it was written. One of these, to whom this reviewer lent the book, said: "Father makes you either take a good look at yourself or stop reading. He makes you realize that life is for living, not for hiding from or living away."

So, we have here another Greeley achievement.

Sister Mary Catherine, O.S.U.  
Ursuline Academy  
Cumberland, Maryland

*NO GOING BACK. Odyssey of a Conversion.* By Margaret Phillips. Academy Library Guild, Fresno, California, 1964. Pp. vii, 100. Cloth, \$3.50.

Margaret Phillips writes her spiritual odyssey with poetic insight. The major purpose as told by Merle Armitage in the foreword and repeated variously by the author is to encourage others in their struggles to "come home."

The book reveals a sensitive, romantic, profoundly religious soul, who as a young child began to wonder and probe for answers. A fascination with Catholicism in early youth gave way to the preoccupation with young married life, social and civic affairs, but Margaret always retained a secret awareness of the Church and its unwavering position on faith and morals.

Most potent influences affecting the author were the deaths of beloved parents which emphasized the primary importance of the soul, and a restlessness of spirit combined with dissatisfaction with an inherited religion which "seemed to express emptiness." An understanding of the Mass and Newman's *Apologia* are accounted as most decisive factors.

One fact that came through to this reviewer was the influence of the friend to whom the author wrote for help in searching for the truth. This friend responded with that emphatic understanding characterizing real friendship—listening, stimulating, advising, and suggesting good reading material. One wonders if this friend who possessed such deep spiritual insight might be the Merle Armitage of the foreword or



perhaps Father Bede who gave the instructions.

Margaret Phillips testifies to the strength of her convictions when she writes: "For no one, for no thing, would I deny the Faith. I marvel constantly at the straight way that God writes with crooked lines—for how else did I get home?"

Sister M. Eugene Reynolds, O.S.U.  
Ursuline Convent  
Paola, Kansas

*GOD'S KINGDOM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.* By Martin Hopkins, O.P. Saint Mary's College Press, Winona, Minnesota, 1963, *Pro Manuscripto*. Pp. xii, 186. Paper, \$3.00. This textbook for college classes is a continuation of the author's *God's Kingdom in the Old Testament* and follows its general format. It is designed for a two-hour one-semester course of approximately 30 classes. Special attention has been paid to new critical studies and to the literary history of the New Testament.

The author gives a detailed table of assignments, listing the subject matter of each lesson, the basic reading assignment, and the collateral texts to be read. The selected bibliography of texts of the Bible, commentaries and articles, liturgical and patristic materials by both Catholic and non-Catholic authors should be most helpful. Frequent diagrams and charts show dramatically relationships less easily discerned through words alone.

Following the procedure suggested by Father Hopkins ought to be an exciting experience for the teacher

and the serious student. Since each lesson is packed with information, I wonder whether the ordinary college student would feel overwhelmed with his task. For this reason I would like the opportunity to teach the New Testament course using this guide.

Sister Maria Assunta, C.S.C.  
Saint Mary's College  
Notre Dame, Indiana

## SHORT NOTICES

*A CATHOLIC PARENT'S GUIDE TO SEX EDUCATION.* By Dr. Audrey Kelly. Crest Book by Fawcett Publications, Connecticut, 1964. Pp. 128. Paper, 50c.

This reprint makes available to all Dr. Kelly's sensitive and dynamic portrayal of a difficult and delicate subject. Teaches attitudes as well as facts. Includes a glossary of technical terms. Although directed to parents, it can be as helpful to Sisters who have the opportunity to help young people in this often neglected area.

*MODERN PSYCHIATRY: A Handbook for Believers.* By Francis J. Braceland, M.D., and Michael Stock, O.P. Doubleday, New York, 1963. Pp. xiv, 346. Cloth, \$4.95.

This basic book, written by a psychiatrist and a priest, gives a survey, in terms understandable to all, of modern psychiatry, its history, its principal movements and techniques, its relation to religion and its significance for the future. Reliable and thorough without being pedantic.



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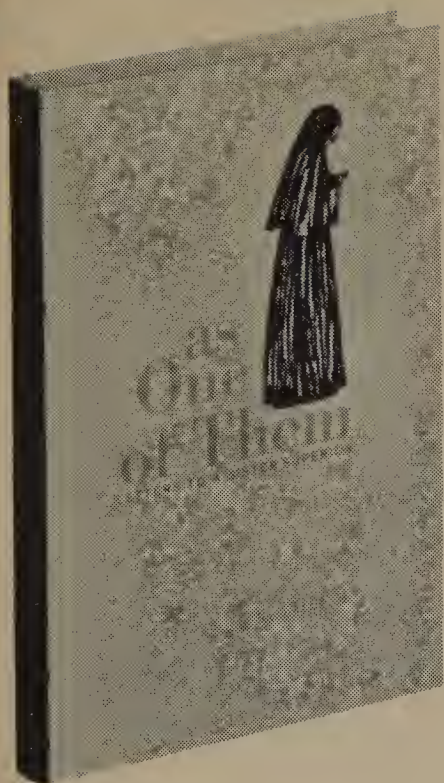
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